


COVID-19 and COVID-19 Vaccine Communication in 2023

Housekeeping

- **How to Ask Questions**

- Click on the  icon found at the bottom part of your screen
- A box will open where you can type in questions, comments, indicate sound problems, etc.
- Use this throughout the webinar to ask questions

- **Slides & Recording**

- This webinar is being recorded and a link as well as slides will be emailed out through our listserv as well as posted on our website at: www.michigan.gov/COVIDvaccineprovider

Partners

University of Michigan

Rogel Cancer Center

Center for Health Communications Research

Michigan Community Engaged Alliance (CEAL) Against COVID-19

MDHHS Division of Immunization Outreach and Education Team

Purpose

- Provide updates to key facts about COVID-19 and COVID vaccines.
- Share conversation strategies that can help build trust and avoid conflict and argument.
- Help you have productive conversations about COVID-19 and COVID vaccines.

Key facts

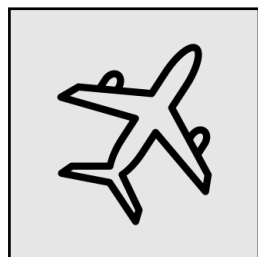
1. COVID-19 is still causing serious illness, hospitalization, and deaths.
2. COVID-19 is more than a respiratory illness.
3. Reinfection with COVID-19 is common and a problem.
4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection.
5. Protection from COVID-19 is particularly important for those at higher risk of serious illness.

1. COVID-19 is still causing serious illness, hospitalization, and deaths

Nationally

295,140 new cases per week

That's 2,000 airplanes full of people



3,756 deaths per week

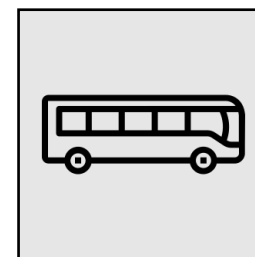
25 airplanes full of people

[CDC COVID Data Tracker](#)

Michigan

6,027 new cases per week

That's 200 buses full of people



245 deaths per week

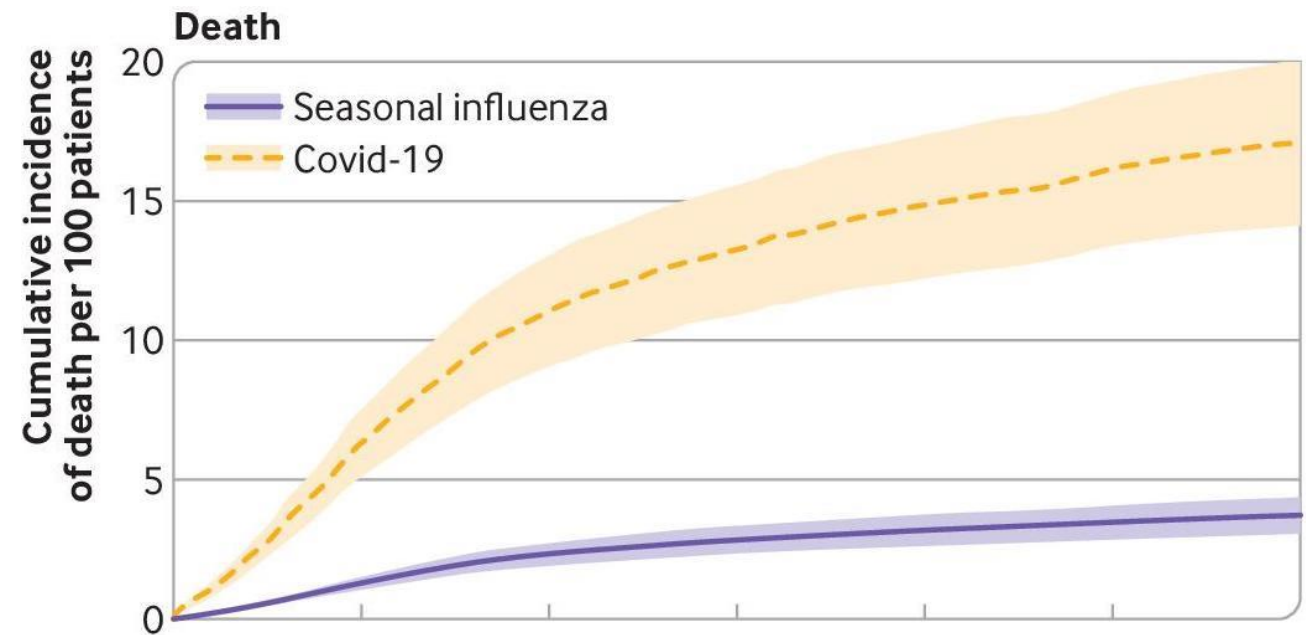
8 buses full of people

[Michigan COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard](#)

1. COVID-19 is still causing serious illness, hospitalization, and deaths

Compared to seasonal influenza, COVID-19 causes:

- Worse renal, cardiovascular, respiratory complications
- More admissions to ICU
- Longer LOS
- More ventilator use
- More deaths
 - *Flu*: 1.8 per 100,000
 - *Flu & Pneumonia*: 13 per 100,000
 - *COVID-19*: 85 per 100,000



Sources:

- [FastStats - Influenza \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/fastats/influenza)
- [NVSS - Mortality Data \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/nvss/mortality)
- [Comparative evaluation of clinical manifestations and risk of death in patients admitted to hospital with covid-19 and seasonal influenza: cohort study - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/)

1. COVID-19 is still causing serious illness, hospitalization, and deaths

COVID-19 remains 3rd leading cause of death in US for 3 years in a row.

Total deaths in the United States from COVID-19 and other leading causes, 2020-2022

	Category	Total deaths (Jan.-Sept. 2022)	Total deaths (2021)	Total deaths (2020)
1	Heart disease	572,336	767,937	764,512
2	Cancer	454,176	604,358	599,607
3	COVID-19	234,434	475,059	343,566
4	Accidents	170,166	226,987	203,033
5	Stroke	123,215	162,769	159,248
6	Chronic respiratory	107,559	141,906	152,051
7	Alzheimer	87,866	119,442	134,271
8	Diabetes	74,716	103,197	101,355
9	Other respiratory	50,635	66,381	66,053
10	Renal failure	42,596	53,057	51,221

Notes: For 2022, the total death sum for each category is for January 1 - September 30, 2022, except deaths from accidents and suicides are from January - September 2021. Chronic respiratory is chronic lower respiratory disease.

Source: KFF analysis of CDC mortality and KFF COVID-19 tracker data

Peterson-KFF
Health System Tracker

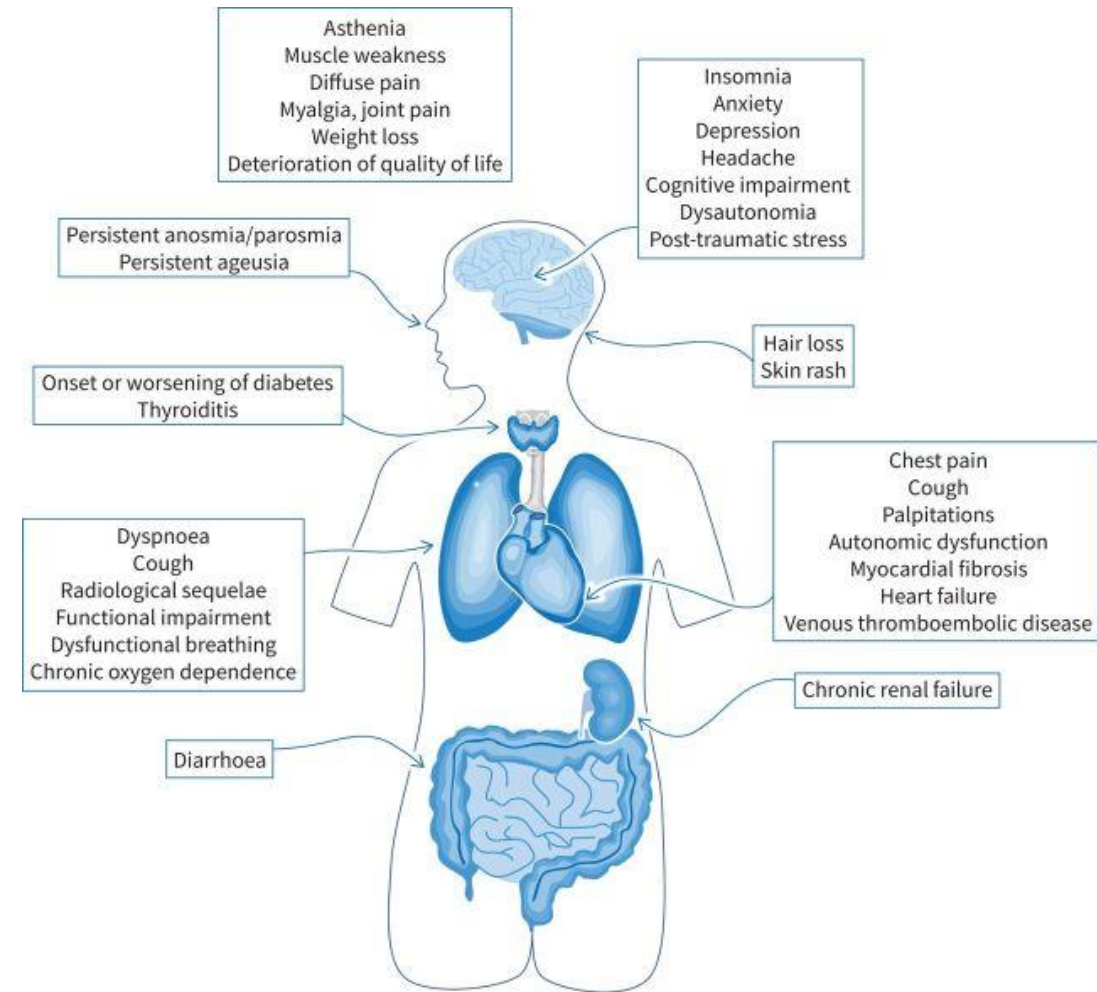
COVID-19 leading cause of death ranking - Peterson-KFF Health System Tracker

FastStats - Leading Causes of Death (cdc.gov)

2. COVID-19 is more than a respiratory illness

COVID is a respiratory illness.

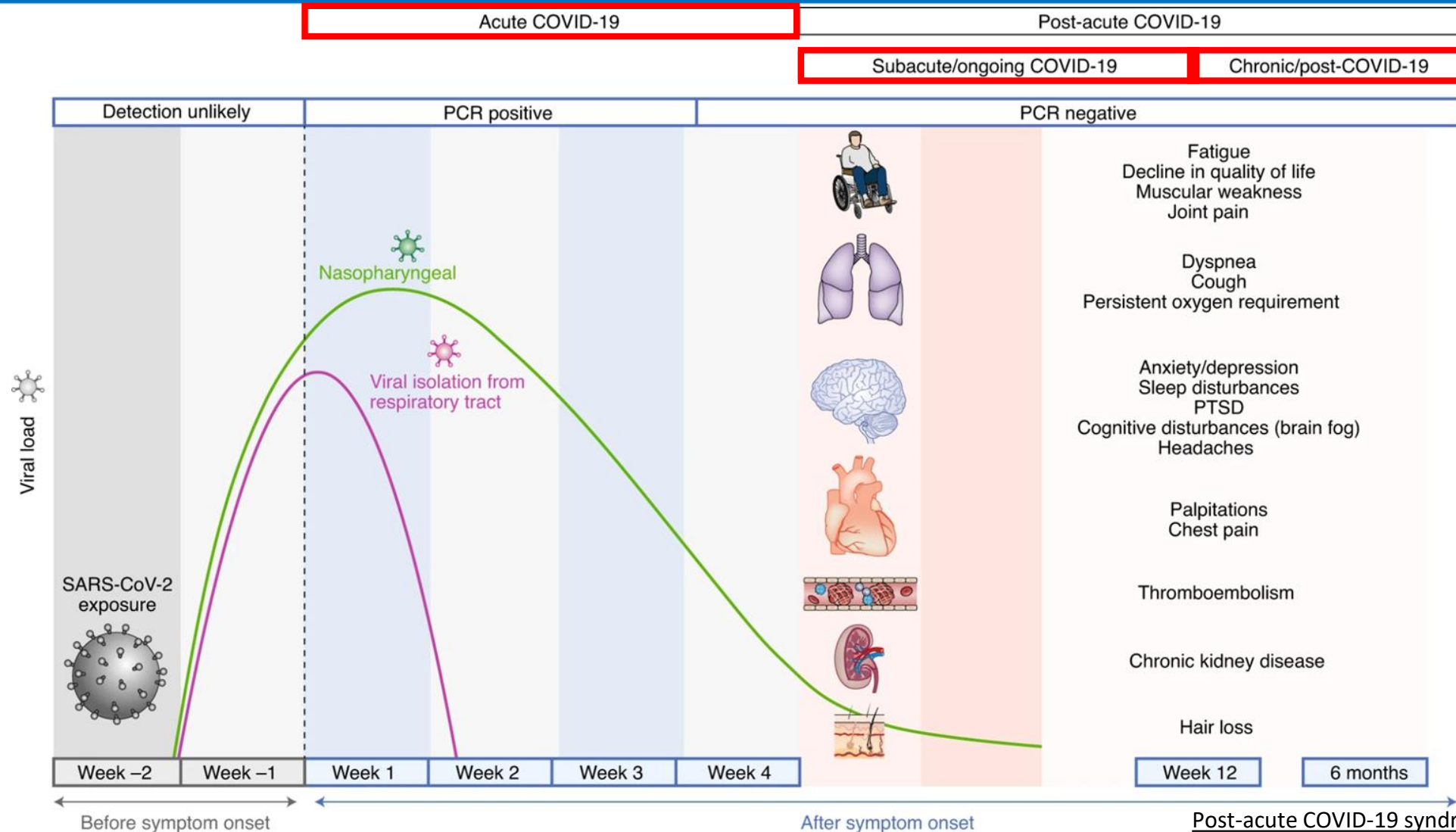
But COVID also impacts nearly every organ system in the body.



2. COVID-19 is more than a respiratory illness

- Acute Illness
 - Lasts 1-2 weeks
 - Mild-to-Severe
- Long COVID (4+ weeks)
 - Symptoms: Respiratory, Heart, Neurological, Digestive, Other (e.g. fatigue, SOB, brain fog)
 - ~ 3.9 million cases total
 - July 2021: Added as a recognized condition that could result in a disability under the ADA
- Lasting COVID Effects (12+ weeks)
 - Increased risk of chronic health issues like diabetes, heart disease, and neurological conditions
 - Research ongoing

2. COVID-19 is more than a respiratory illness



2. COVID-19 is more than a respiratory illness

One person's experience with long COVID:

“Before Covid I ran five to 10 miles and lifted weights six days per week. When I tested positive in October 2021, it was mild, I was able to work remotely all week. A few days later, I noticed confusion, dizziness, poor balance, and fatigue...

I'm still bed and sofa-bound in dark quiet rooms and I'm unable to perform any activity longer than 10 minutes....

My job terminated me in June and I'm a shadow of my former self.... Unfortunately I'm now acutely aware of missing out on life. I've been told that I need to grieve my former self but I refuse to give up hope.”

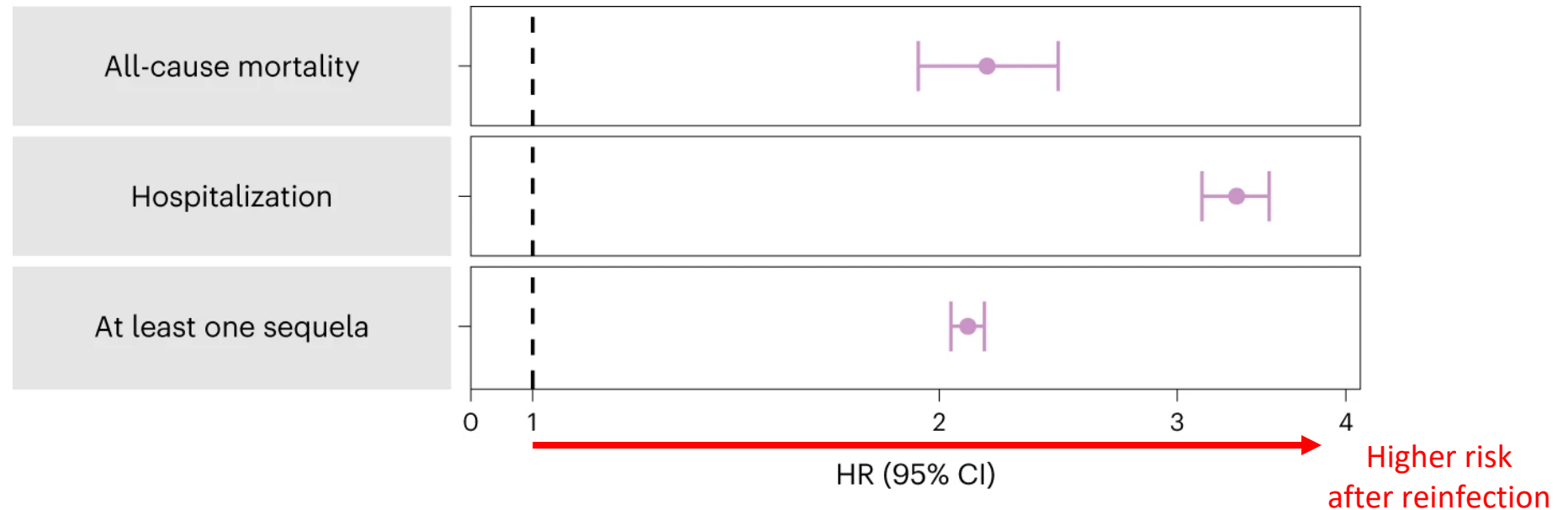


3. Reinfection with COVID-19 is common and a problem

- Viruses are always mutating and changing to make new variants.
- COVID-19 variants have changed to:
 - Spread more easily
 - Cause less severe illness, death – but still has substantial burdens
- As long as COVID-19 continues to spread, it will keep changing.
- Possible future issues include:
 - Less protection from vaccinations
 - Easier spread
 - Increased virulence

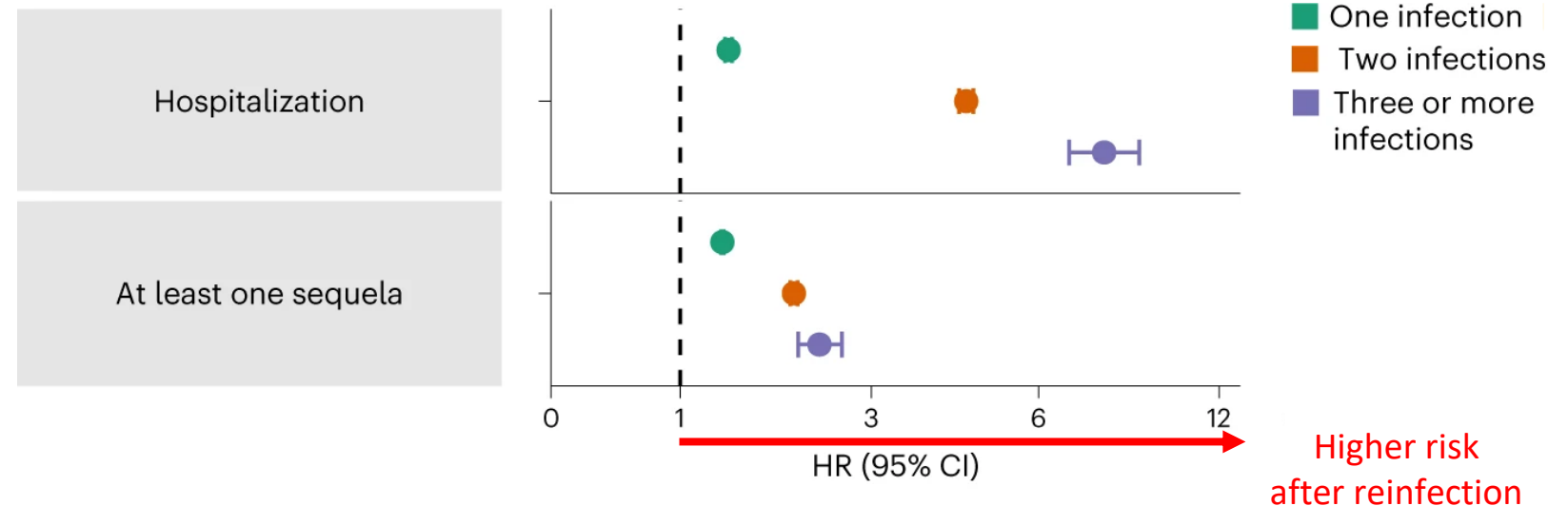
3. Reinfection with COVID-19 is common and a problem

- People who get reinfected with COVID-19 have increased risk of:
 - Serious illness (all organ systems), Hospitalization, Death
- Risk is present in the acute and long-term phases
 - Up to 6mo+



3. Reinfection with COVID-19 is common and a problem

- With each reinfection, the risk increases for:
 - Serious illness (all organ systems)
 - Hospitalization
 - Death



4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

- Sept. 2, 2022: Became available for ages 12+.
 - Oct 12, 2022: Ages 5-11
 - Dec. 9, 2022: Ages 6mo-4yr
- Approved initially based on limited data.
- Updated bivalent booster uptake since Sept. 2022:
 - >290 million worldwide
 - >41 million in the US

4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

Real world experience

- Safety & Side-effects
 - Similar to primary vaccination and booster
- Effectiveness against COVID-19 Omicron variant
 - ~80% effective in reducing hospitalizations and deaths
 - 37% more effective against hospitalization or death compared to original monovalent booster
 - Maintains effectiveness against newer sublineages
 - 50% VE for XBB sublineage that is overtaking BA.5 as most common

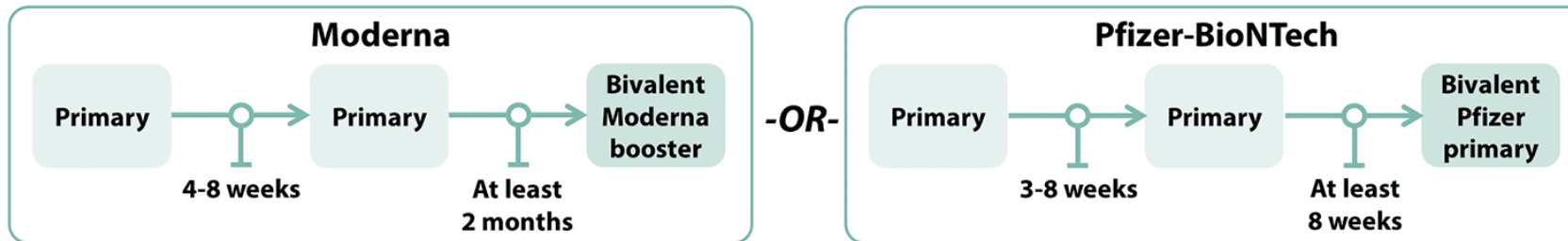
Sources

- [Bivalent BA.4-5 or BA.1 mRNA-booster given as a fourth dose associated with increased protection against COVID-19 hospitalization and death](#)
- [Effectiveness of Bivalent Boosters against Severe Omicron Infection](#)
- [Early Estimates of Bivalent mRNA Booster Dose Vaccine Effectiveness in Preventing Symptomatic SARS-CoV-2 Infection Attributable to Omicron BA.5– and XBB/XBB.1.5–Related Sublineages Among Immunocompetent Adults — Increasing Community Access to Testing Program, United States, December 2022–January 2023](#)

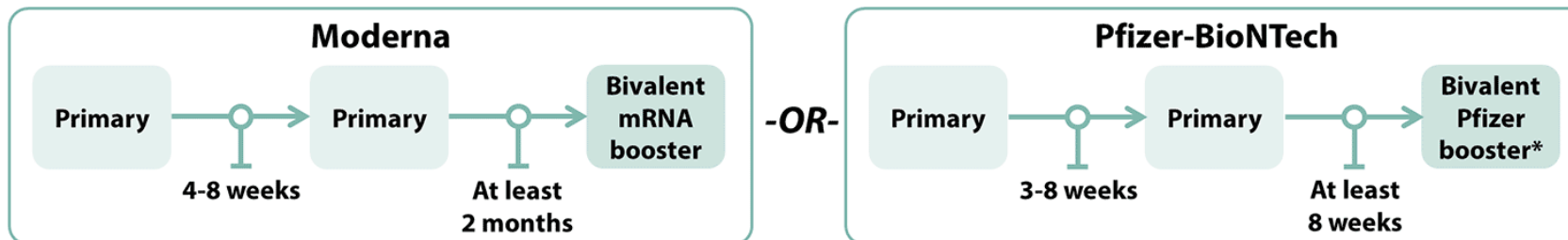
4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

COVID-19 Vaccination Schedule Infographic for People who are NOT Moderately or Severely Immunocompromised

People ages 6 months through 4 years

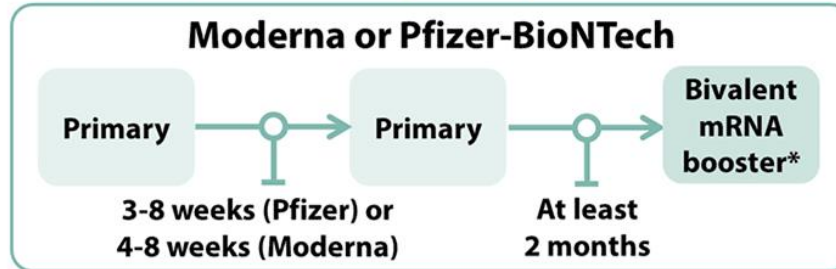


People age 5 years

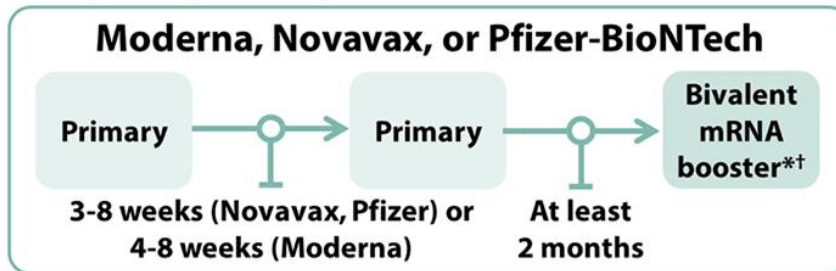


4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

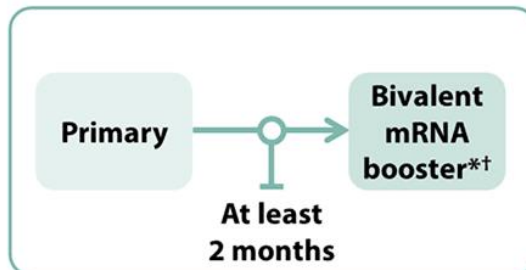
People ages 6 through 11 years



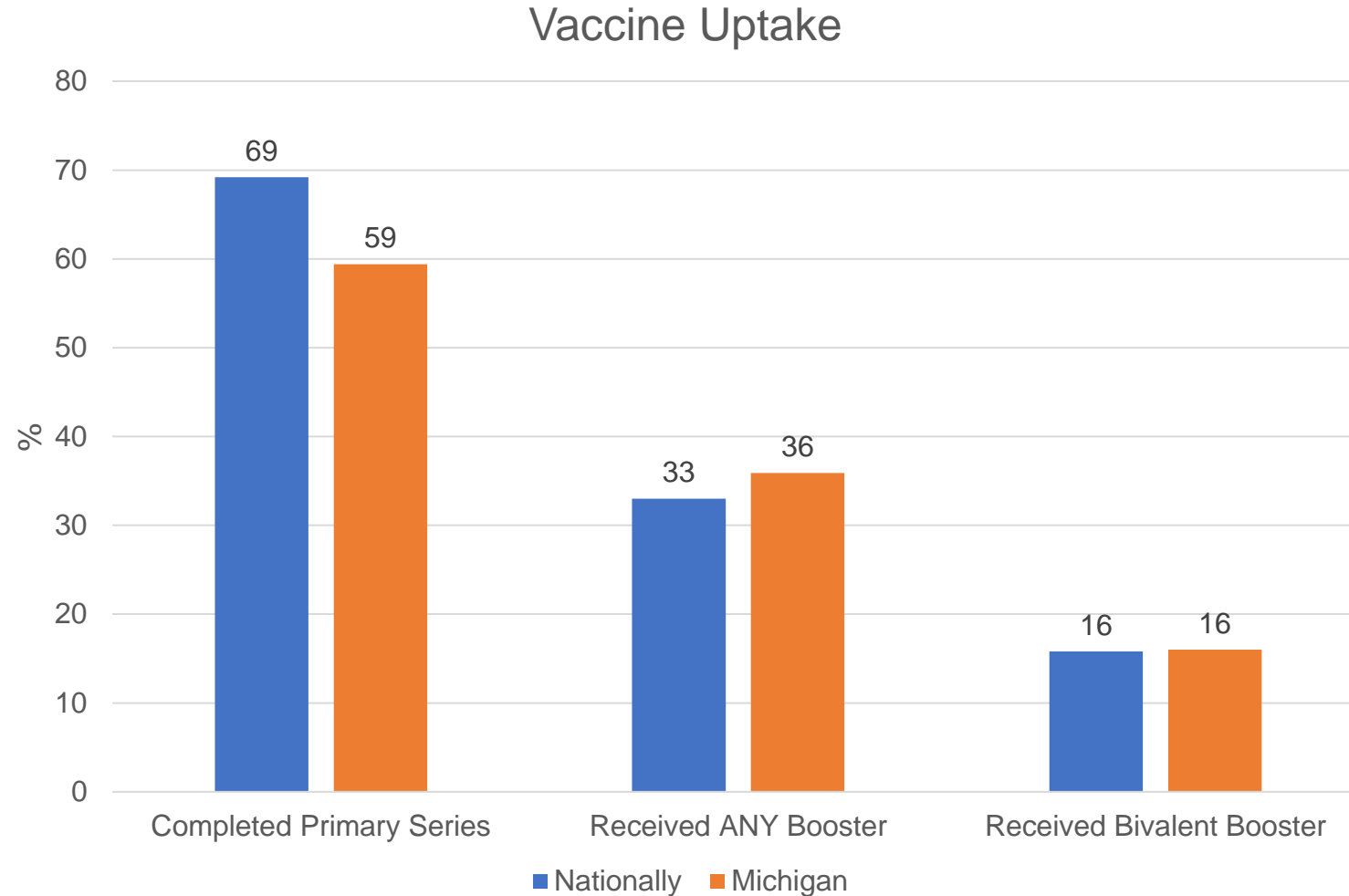
People ages 12 years and older



People ages 18 years and older who previously received Janssen primary series dose[‡]



4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

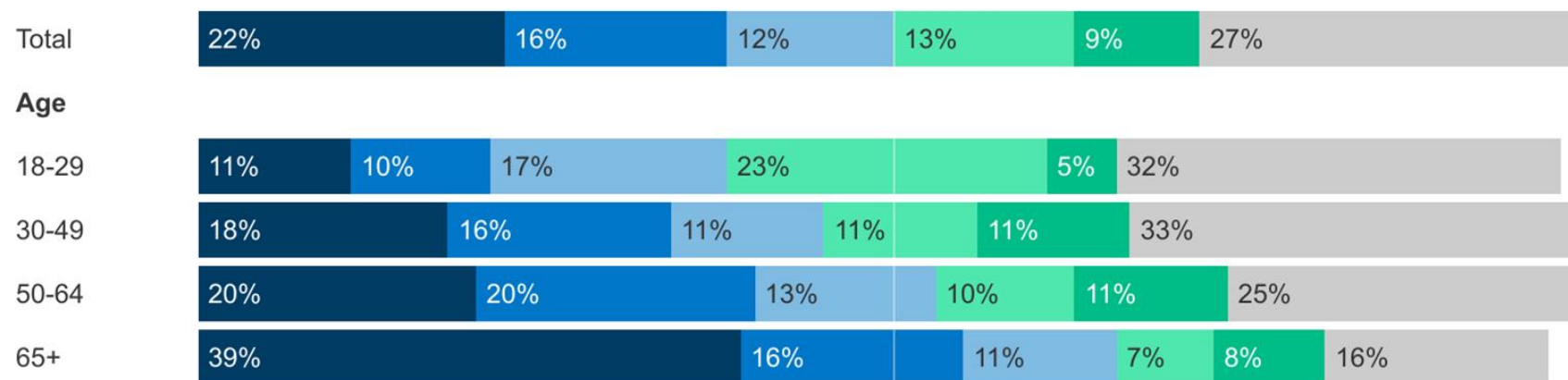


4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

Bivalent booster awareness and attitudes

Have you received a dose of the new, updated COVID-19 booster that has been available since early September, or not? [If not] As you may know, the CDC currently recommends that all adults who have received a COVID-19 vaccine get a dose of the new, updated COVID-19 booster after a certain amount of time has passed since their initial vaccination or last booster dose. Do you think you will...?

■ Got updated booster ■ As soon as possible ■ Wait and see ■ Only if required ■ Definitely not get updated booster ■ Not eligible for updated booster (unvaccinated or partially vaccinated)



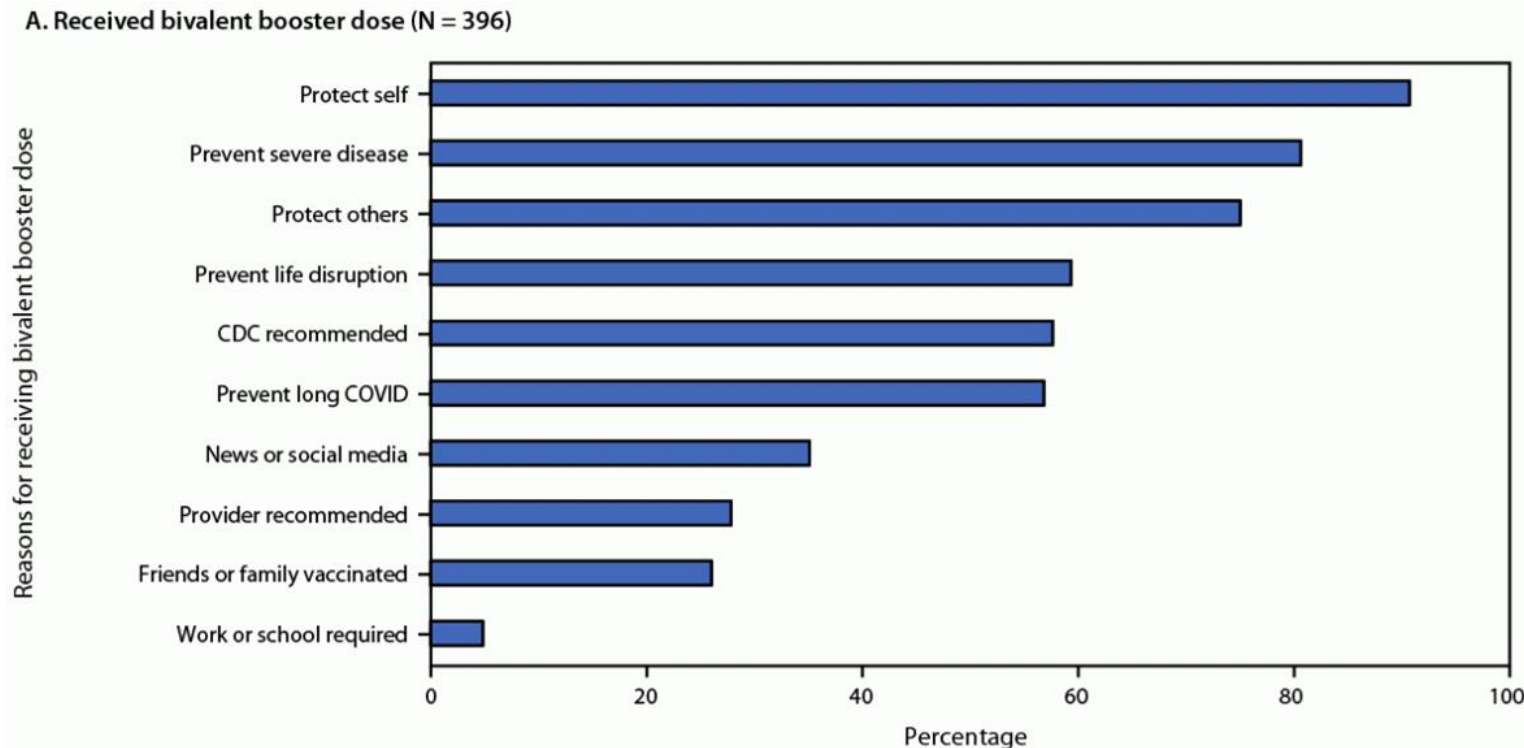
NOTE: See topline for full question wording.

SOURCE: KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor (Nov 29-Dec 8, 2022)

KFF COVID-19
Vaccine Monitor

4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

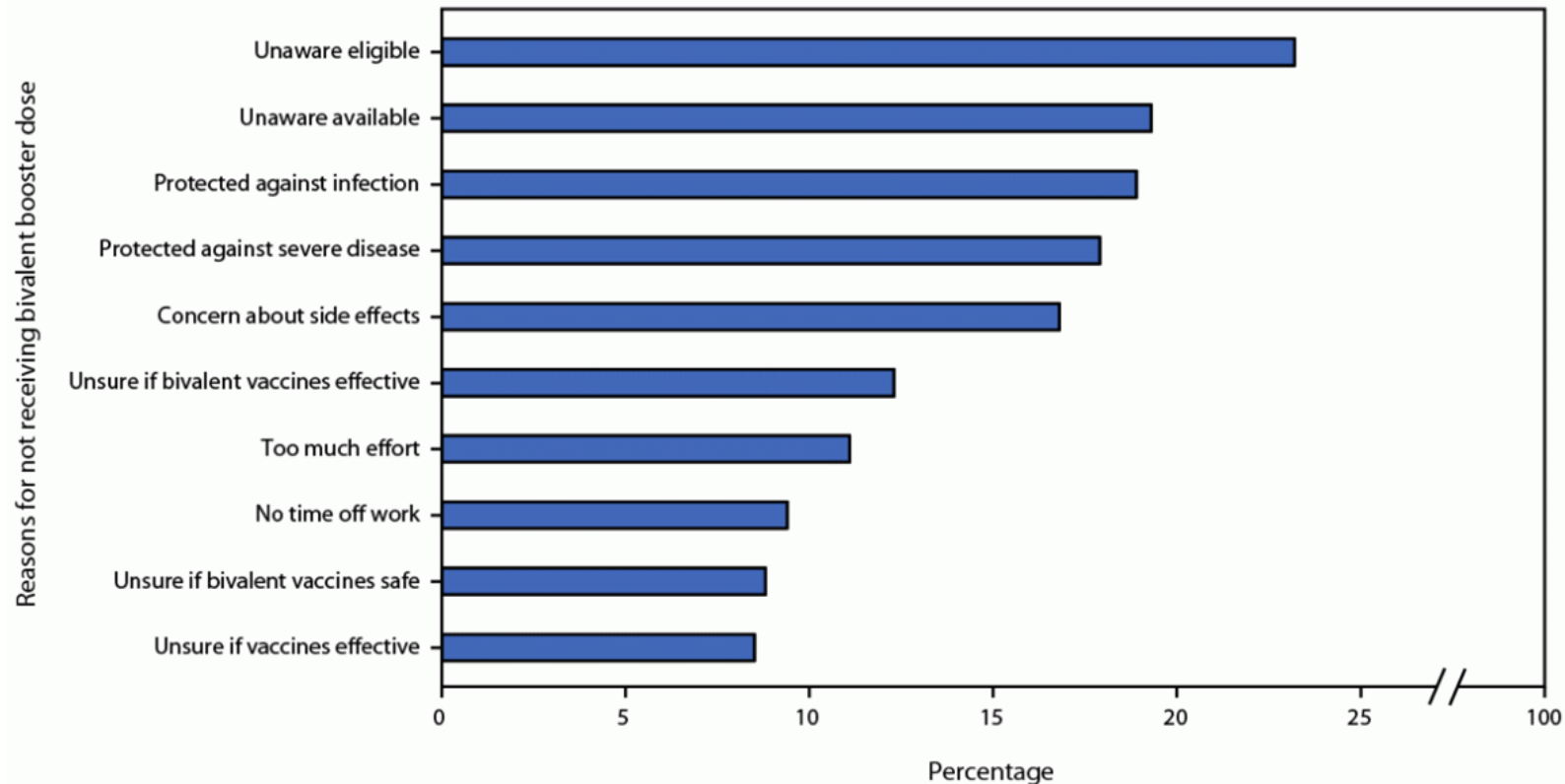
Why are people getting the bivalent booster?



4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

Why are people **not** getting the bivalent booster?

B. Did not receive bivalent booster dose (N = 714)



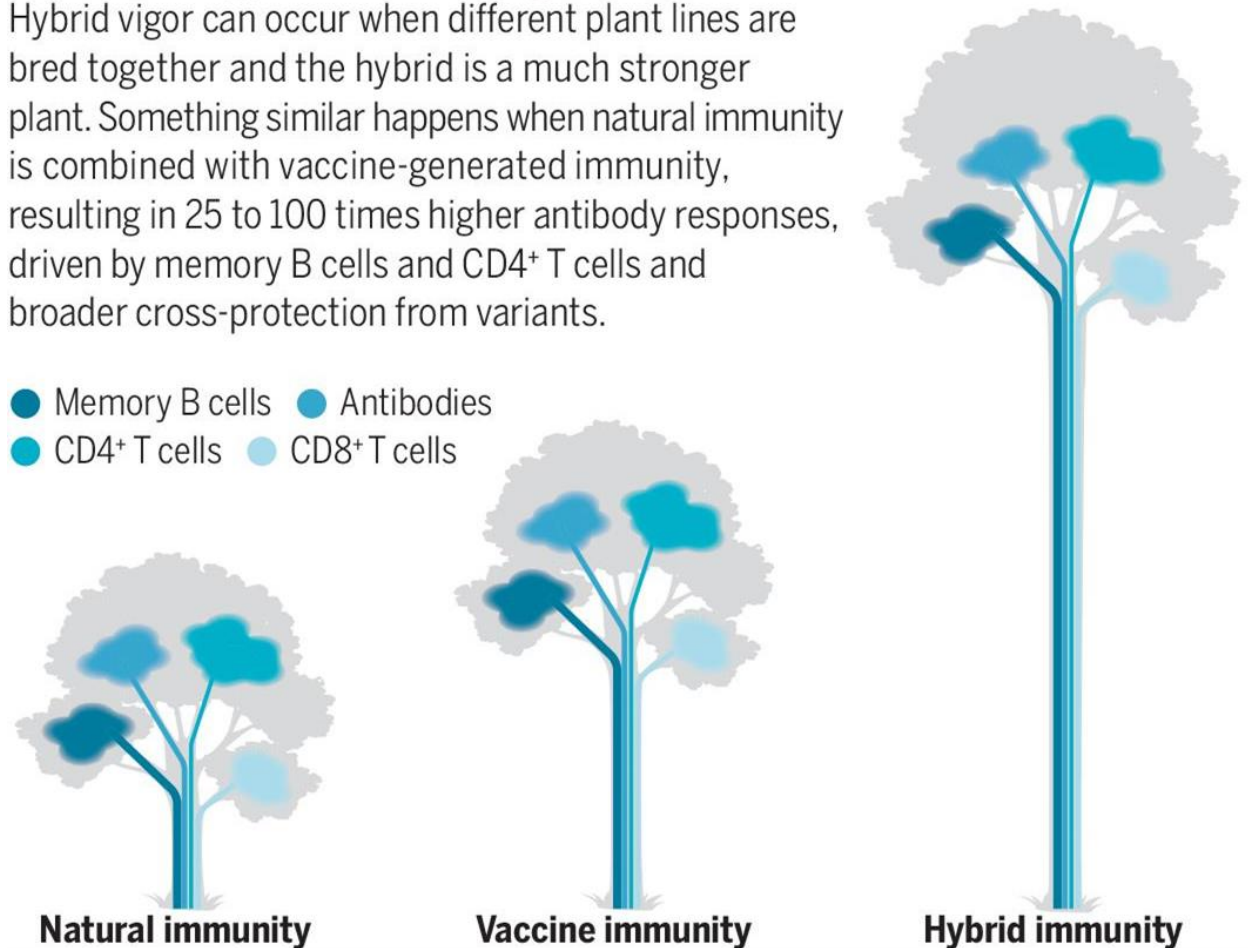
4. The bivalent COVID-19 vaccine offers important protection

- Hybrid immunity
 - Occurs when someone has gotten COVID-19 + the COVID-19 vaccines.
 - Most protective than either one alone.
 - COVID-19 infection exposes body to many antigens + vaccine exposes just spike protein (most important target).

Hybrid vigor immunity with COVID-19 vaccines

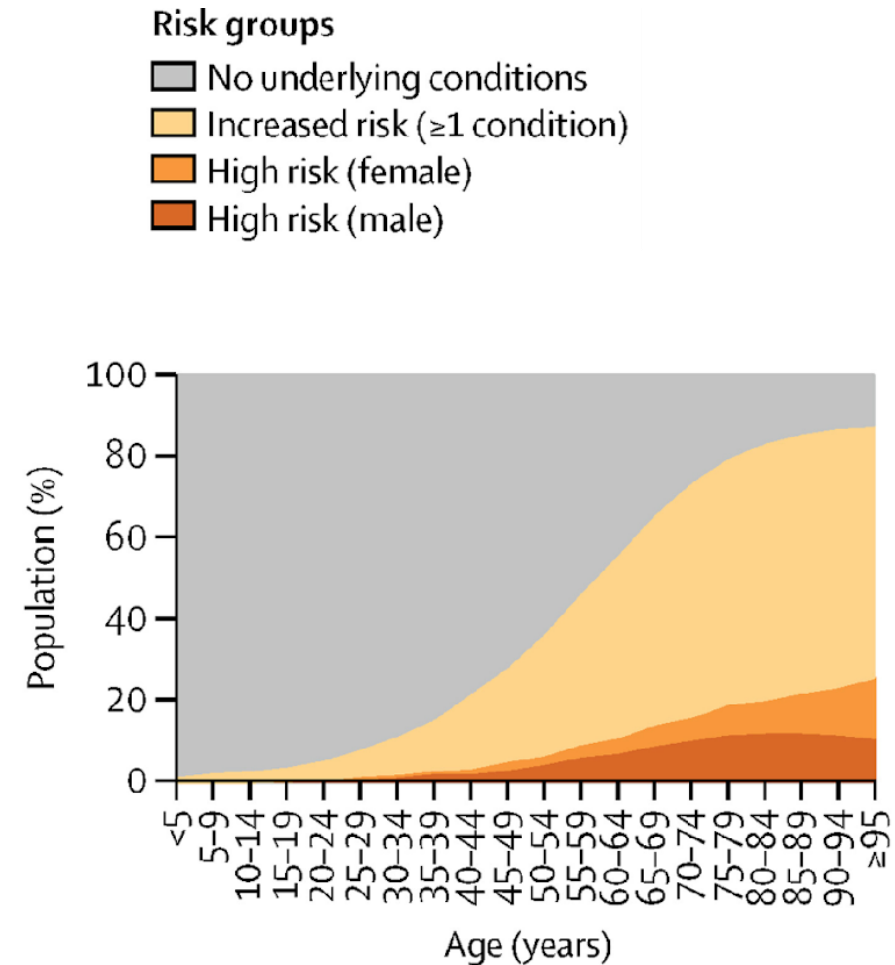
Hybrid vigor can occur when different plant lines are bred together and the hybrid is a much stronger plant. Something similar happens when natural immunity is combined with vaccine-generated immunity, resulting in 25 to 100 times higher antibody responses, driven by memory B cells and CD4⁺ T cells and broader cross-protection from variants.

● Memory B cells ● Antibodies
● CD4⁺ T cells ● CD8⁺ T cells



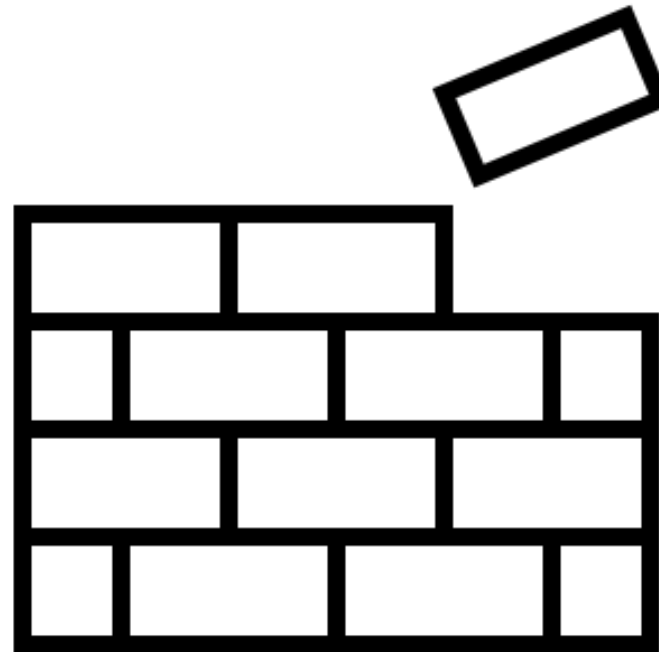
5. Protection from COVID-19 is particularly important for those at higher risk of serious illness from COVID

- Common risk factors
 - Age
 - Immunocompromised
 - From condition or treatment
 - Underlying health conditions
 - e.g., COPD, asthma, diabetes, cancer
 - Pregnancy



5. Protection from COVID-19 is particularly important for those at higher risk of serious illness from COVID

- Layers of protection – like building a brick wall
 - Vaccines
 - Ventilation
 - Physical distance
 - Masking
 - Handwashing
 - Testing
 - Treatment



Vaccine Communication Strategies

Communication strategies subtopics

- Vaccine Hesitancy
 - Importance of trust
- Communication Strategies
 - Open-ended questions
 - Reflective Listening
 - Building Reflections
 - Acknowledge
 - Affirm
 - Ask-Tell-Ask

Vaccine communication strategies

The first important step in communicating about the COVID-19 vaccines is to **establish trust**.

We can build on this trust by communicating in a way that makes people feel **heard and respected**.

Use open-ended questions

- Helps people feel heard.
- Reduces defensiveness.
- Facilitates conversation.
- Builds trust.

Examples:

Closed-ended question	Open-ended question
Are you ready to get the bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster?	What has been your experiences with COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines?
Are you going to get the bivalent COVID-19 booster?	What are your thoughts about getting the updated bivalent COVID-19 vaccine booster?

Reflective listening

Showing that you're actively listening can help you have a productive conversation about COVID-19 vaccines.

Strategies:

- Make a statement, not a question.
- The pitch of your voice should go down at the end rather than up.
- Restate what the patient said - but change the words, **don't parrot.**

Effective techniques will:

- Soften the ground for information exchange and attitude shift.
- Build trust.
- Lower resistance.

Building reflections

Here are some starters to help you reflect:

- “It sounds like you are feeling...”
- “You are concerned that...”
- “You’re worried that the vaccine may cause....”
- “You’re scared about getting the vaccine because...”
- “You are unsure about getting the vaccine because...”

Notice that “YOU” is the core of each statement!

Acknowledge

There is often a kernel of truth at the center of common concerns about the COVID-19 vaccines. Acknowledging the truth behind these concerns help people feel heard.

Here are some reflective starters to help you acknowledge truth:

- “You’re right that...”
- “It’s true that...”

Examples:

- “You’re right that the bivalent COVID-19 boosters were approved quickly...”
- “It’s true that you can still get COVID-19 after getting the vaccine...”

Affirm

It can be helpful to recognize and affirm common motivations (e.g. for health, for safety, for certainty) that may drive some worries about the COVID-19 vaccine.

This helps people feel respected. They might also become more open to new information or perspectives.

Examples of affirming motivations:

- “You care about your health.”
- “You want to make sure this is safe.”
- “You want to protect those close to you from COVID-19.”

Ask-Tell-Ask

It is common for healthcare professionals to provide large amounts of detailed information to patients very quickly.

- We call this an info dump.
- Can be overwhelming for patients or make them defensive.

Instead, try offering small amounts of info at a time.

- Use Ask-Tell-Ask method.
- Think of it as using a spoon instead of a shovel.



Ask-Tell-Ask (also known as Elicit-Provide-Elicit)

1. **Ask** the patient to tell you what they already know about the topic.
 - Reflect and Affirm what they tell you.
2. **Ask** permission to give them information.
 - E.g., “Is it ok if I give you some information about X?”
 - Do NOT give info if they state a clear No.
3. **Tell** them some information about the topic.
 - Keep it brief. Usually a few sentences will be enough.
4. **Ask** what they think of the information.
 - E.g., “What are you thinking now about X?”

“Hard No” and conspiracy beliefs

- Misinformation about COVID-19 and the vaccines is common.
- Direct conflict not helpful and may increase resistance.
- Communication Strategies
 - Reflective Listening: “You’re concerned that...”
 - Acknowledge: “There is a lot of information and misinformation and sometimes it can be hard to know who to trust.”
 - Affirm: “You care about your health and have given this a lot of thought.”
 - Ask-Tell-Ask:
 - **Truth Sandwich**
 - Think about trusted sources of info (1:1 conversations)
 - Graceful exit

Conversation Examples

General Conversation Strategy

- Open-ended question
 - E.g., “We have all been through a lot together these past three years. What has been your experience with COVID-19 and COVID-19 vaccines?”
- Reflection
 - Vaccine and COVID history
 - Acknowledge
 - Affirm
 - Specific concern
- Ask
- Tell
- Ask

Introduction



Concern: Pandemic fatigue



“I am so ready to be done with COVID and for things to be finally getting back to normal.”

Reflect & Affirm: “You care about your health and want to protect yourself from COVID-19. At the same time, you’re tired of the ways that COVID-19 has impacted your life.”

Ask: “Would it be OK for me to share with you what we are learning about how to live safely in world with COVID-19?”

Sure

Tell: “Whether we like it or not, it does not look like COVID-19 is going to just go away. Many thousands of people are still getting sick with COVID every day and it is still one of the leading causes of death. Unfortunately, people can get COVID more than once and there is an increased risk of short-term and long-term health problems every time you catch it. The good news is that we have many ways now of dealing with COVID-19. One of the most important is to stay up-to-date on your COVID-19 vaccine. This means making sure to get the updated bivalent booster. Real world experience show that the updated booster gives important protection from catching COVID and serious illness and death from COVID.”

Ask: “I wonder what your thoughts are about getting the updated COVID-19 booster?”

Concern: Booster safety and side effects



“The updated booster was approved quickly. I’m not sure it is safe.”

Reflect & Affirm: “You care about your health. You’ve heard the updated boosters were approved more quickly than the earlier vaccines and worry that they might not be safe.”

Ask: “Would it be OK for me to share a little more with you about the updated booster process?”

Sure

Tell: “The updated boosters were made using the same approach as prior COVID-19 vaccines, but with instructions to protect against new variants. **Over 41 million people age 5 and older have gotten the updated booster. The booster protects from current variants and prevents illness, hospitalization, and death.** It’s clear that getting the updated booster is safer and healthier compared to the risk of getting COVID-19 without it.”

Ask: “Where does this leave you with the updated COVID-19 booster?”

Concern: Booster efficacy



“The vaccine doesn’t work. I know a lot of people who got the vaccine and still got COVID-19.”

Reflect & Affirm: “You’ve thought it through and talked to people you trust about the COVID-19 vaccines. You want to keep yourself safe, but you’re not convinced the booster can help.”

Ask: “Would it be OK if I shared with you more about how the updated booster works?”

Yeah, OK

Tell: “**Millions of people have gotten the updated COVID-19 booster at this point, and we have seen that it’s effective in the real world.** The COVID-19 virus keeps changing to create new variants. These new variants can get people sick even if they had been infected with COVID or gotten the original vaccine before. The vaccine booster was updated to protect against the new variants. It is also important to keep in mind that the most important job of the COVID vaccine is to protect against serious illness, hospitalization, and death. The update booster definitely does that.”

Ask: “How are you feeling now about getting the updated COVID-19 booster?”

Concern: Someone already had COVID-19



“I already got COVID-19. I don’t need the booster.”

Reflect & Affirm: “I’m sorry to hear you got COVID and glad you are better now. You feel your prior COVID gives you protection and don’t see much of a point in getting the updated booster.”

Ask: “Do you mind if I share a little more with you about what we have learned about COVID-19 immunity?”

Go ahead.

Tell: “You’re right that having had COVID gives you some protection. Unfortunately, many people get COVID more than once and there are increased risks of serious illness and long-term health effects every time you get it. We know now that hybrid immunity that comes from having had COVID and also getting the vaccine offer the strongest and longest lasting protection. Even if you have had COVID before, getting the updated COVID vaccine booster is important to to give extra protection against new variants of the virus.”

Ask: “I wonder what your thoughts are now about getting the updated COVID vaccine booster?”

COVID-19 is not that serious anymore. I don't think I need a booster.

Reflect & Affirm: Your health is important to you, and you've made a real effort to protect yourself from COVID. Right now, you are not sure how much of a problem COVID is still or what you might want to do about it.

Ask: Would it be OK for me to share a little more about COVID and the updated bivalent COVID vaccines?

I guess so.

Tell: You are right that there are fewer people getting sick with or dying from COVID-19 now compared to the high points earlier in the pandemic. Unfortunately, many thousands of people are still catching COVID-19 every day and COVID-19 continues to be one of the leading causes of death in the US. For example, people are several times more likely to get seriously ill or die from COVID-19 compared to the flu. The good news is that the updated bivalent vaccine booster works against the new virus variants and gives important protection against catching COVID-19, long COVID-19, and serious illness and death from COVID-19.

Ask: I wonder what your feelings are now about the bivalent COVID vaccine booster?

I don't think my kids should get the COVID-19 vaccine.
I'm not sure it's safe for them.

Reflect & Affirm: You're concerned about the health of your children and to make the right choices for them. Right now, you're not sure that includes getting your children the COVID-19 vaccine.

Ask: Is it ok to share with you information from doctors who are looking at COVID-19 vaccines for children?

OK

Tell: Many millions of children have gotten the COVID vaccine and we know that these vaccines are very safe and offer important protection against the virus. You are right that there are some side effects from the COVID-19 vaccines, like soreness in the arm and feeling tired. Not everyone has these side effects, but when these happen, they are the body's normal reaction to the vaccine.

Serious or long-term side-effects from the COVID vaccine are extremely rare and much less of a problem than getting infected with the COVID virus. For example, we do know that some young people have had inflammation in or around their heart after getting the vaccine. While this does happen in very rare cases, it is actually much more likely to happen and be more serious for people who get infected with the COVID virus. Everything we know now tells us that getting the COVID vaccine is much safer and better for a person's health compared to getting infected by the COVID virus.

Ask: What are you thinking now about getting the COVID vaccine for your children?

COVID doesn't make kids that sick so I'm not sure the vaccine is really needed.

Reflect & Affirm: You care about keeping your kids healthy, so you've given a lot of thought into whether or not to get the COVID-19 vaccine for them.

Ask: Is it ok to share some information from doctors who are looking at COVID vaccines for children?

I suppose so.

Tell: You're right that children are less likely to get very sick with COVID-19. Unfortunately, newer variants of the COVID virus have caused many more kids to get sick and have to go to the hospital. Getting infected with the COVID virus can also cause problems like 'long COVID' and increase the risk of long-term health problems. Getting vaccinated can help kids stay in school, prevent serious infections, and protect everyone around them. If your child has gotten sick with COVID, getting the vaccine can help reduce their risk of catching COVID again.

Ask: I wonder what you make of this new information?

Purpose

- Provide updates to key facts about COVID-19 and COVID vaccines.
- Share conversation strategies that can help build trust and avoid conflict and argument.
- Help you have productive conversations about COVID-19 and COVID vaccines.



What questions do you have?

Thank You!

Next “Noontime Knowledge” Update: TBD

Please watch your email for a date, link, and topic!

Questions Email: checcimms@michigan.gov

www.michigan.gov/COVIDvaccineprovider